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forces, and a shielding plate configured to shield brake components and made of damped steel that dampens noise and vibrations.

Claim 6. (Amended) A backing plate according to claim 4 wherein said damped steel comprises first and second layers of steel of approximately equal thickness.

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Claim 7. (Amended) A backing plate according to claim 4 wherein said abutment plate is made of steel.

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Claim 9. (Amended) A shielding plate comprising a sheet of damped steel configured to be attached to a vehicle and to protect brake components from dust and dirt, and an abutment plate configured to engage brake shoes and to resist braking forces applied by said brake shoes.

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Claim 12 (Amended) A shielding plate according to claim 9 wherein said damped steel comprises first and second layers of steel on opposite sides of a dampening material, said first and second layers having approximately equal thickness.

Please add the following new claims:

Claim 13. (New) A combination according to claim 1 wherein said abutment plate means and said shielding plate are attached to each other.

Claim 14 (New) A combination according to claim 1 wherein said shielding plate is configured to have a hydraulic cylinder mounted thereon.

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Claim 15 (New) A drum brake comprising an abutment plate comprising a sheet of steel having a first part configured to attach to an axle housing and a second part configured to resist braking forces, and a shielding plate made of damped steel attached to said abutment plate and configured to support brake shoes.

Claim 16 (New) A drum brake according to claim 15 wherein said shielding plate is configured to receive a hydraulic cylinder.